

Shavuos Rays

Breslov
Yom-Tov
Inspiration



Dear Readers,

Kabbalos HaTorah, as with all good things, is dependent on coming close to the Tzaddik. According to the level of our connection to the Tzaddik, that's how we merit Kabbalos HaTorah. But now comes the million-dollar question: How do we come close to the Tzaddik?

It's all a matter of wanting, searching, begging Hashem and davening that we should merit finding the Tzaddik, and coming close to him. And it's not something that we can find once and keep in our pockets – we need to keep working on it! ***'There are those who have come to the Tzaddik, but his light is still dark by them, and they don't taste the sweetness of his true eitzos, and therefore they are still far from their tikkun... We need to expend much effort in seeking, and if we'll truly search, we'll surely find him.'*** (Likutei Halachos)

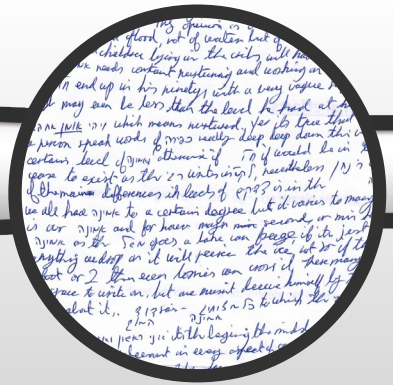
Practically speaking, it means not just tolerating everything Breslov (which our husbands can sometimes be consumed by), but embracing it all happily, knowing that it's our share in connecting to the Tzaddik, who is the vessel through which all good comes down in the world! Believing in this, and that he has the power to rectify all of our souls completely, is the emunah in the Tzaddik. Shavuos gives us a boost in this, since that was when Hashem promised Moshe Rabbeinu that *'They will believe in you too forever.'* ***'And every true Tzaddik in every generation is the aspect of Moshe.'*** (Likutei Halachos)

This emunah brings us to such joy: Hashem gave us the Tzaddik to rectify us and bring us close to Him, how fortunate we are! ***'Baruch Hashem, we have what to be happy with, simply that He chose us from amongst all the nations... and especially that in this generation, we merited not being opponents of the true 'owner of joy', who is the source of happiness, the source of holiness, the source of emunah, the source of true and eternal life, the source of wisdom. How lucky we are that we merited it! ...Therefore, we are obliged to rejoice and dance every day, and especially on Yom Tov...'*** (Alim Litrufa)

Dance away, especially since happiness is the vessel to receive the Torah, and enjoy your Yom Tov,

Faigy Kahane

For any comments or questions, please contact us at raysof148@gmail.com



The Torah of Chessed

Rabbi Elimech Silbiger

The days of sefiras ha'omer are known to be a period of great longing and desiring for closeness to Hashem, days of purification from all bad and higher levels of kedusha, as we say in the tefilla after sefiras ha'omer: 'טהרינו ולקדשינו בקדושתך העליונה, כדי לטהרנו מקלפותינו ומטומאתינו' Listening to a Breslover Sefiras Ha'omer, where the cries and longing of the tzibbur electrify the whole atmosphere and penetrate deep down into one's heart, is a living vision of this. Although women generally count without a brachah, they still have a part in this mitzvah and the days of longing.

The Rebbe teaches us the great avoda of longing, and the nachas that Hashem gets from it. He once said that the zeida the Baal Shem Tov was so fond of his daughter Udel, since she always went around with a heart full of longing to Hashem, saying, 'What can I possibly do to give nachas for the Ribbono Shel Olam?'

The apex of all this longing is the 50th day, the great Yom Tov of Shavuot, which is Kabbalos HaTorah. Many people ask,

some openly while others only in their hearts and minds; "What exactly is it all about? We were given the Torah 3331 years ago, and chas veshalom one may not add, diminish or slightly change the Torah that was given to us on Har Sinai. So what's the meaning of all this longing for Kabbalos HaTorah? We've received it already?!"

David Hamelech says in Tehillim, 'the days of our years are **seventy** years.' The seventy years symbolize the '**seventy faces of the Torah.**' Ideally, a person should attain an added face of the seventy faces of the Torah each year of his lifetime. Obviously, there are many, many different ways of obtaining these seventy faces of the Torah; each and every person according to his neshama, and surely it means differently for men and for women, as we know that women don't have the mitzvah of limud haTorah, (although they do say daily birchos HaTorah).

We find that when Eliezer was looking for the zivug of Yitzchak Avinu, his sign was a girl who would excel in the middah of

chessed – she was the chosen one for him. In Aishes Chayil, which encompasses the value of a Bas Yisrael, Shlomo Hamelech writes, '**V'toras chesed al leshonoh – the Torah of chessed is on her tongue.**' Although Chazal say that the Yidden have three signs – they are bashful, merciful, and do kindness, the woman's middah is specifically chessed, kindness.

There are many different ways and many different levels of doing chessed. There is an expression – a gaon in chessed. There is chessed between man and his friend, and between man and his wife. There are major differences in the intention of doing chessed; leshem shamayim and not for recognition, chessed shel emes, and there is also doing chessed with the Shechina so to speak, doing mitzvos to be kind to the Shechinah and Hakados Baruch Hu, and in each of these areas there are lots of levels. There is chessed in words, in the way one speaks, smiles, and so on. May we be zoiche to a higher level of Toras Chessed, and may it be fulfilled with us: "זוכר חסדי אבות" ומביא גואל לבני בניהם



A Touching Tefila

ליקוטי תפילות ה"ב א

Each of the three Shalosh Regalim rectify one of the three bad desires, therefore one must be very careful to honor the Yom Tov properly, for through the Yom Tov one merits rectifying the three middos. – Likutei Moharan 2:1

Help us merit to receive the Shalosh Regalim; Pesach, Shavuos and Sukkos, with much joy and happiness, with fear and love, holiness and great purity as is Your good will. Let me merit to honor them with all kinds of honor and pleasure; with good food and drink, delicacies and honorable clothing; with tefilla b'kavana, rejoicing and great hisorerus. And we should merit to draw upon us great and new da'as on every one of the three Yomim Tovim.

And let us merit from now, strengthen us and make us happy with holy joy, in a manner that will draw upon us great holy strength and might, until we'll merit to quickly break and nullify all these three desires, and we should merit to draw holy da'as into our hearts through the holiness of these three Yomim Tovim. And through this, we'll merit to rectify our hearts, to nullify all the three desires so that they shouldn't leave any impression at all.

Please Hashem, have mercy on us and fulfill our requests for the good with mercy. For with Your mercy, You revealed to us the holy eitzos to save ourselves from all bad, and You let us know a good and just eitzza to break all the three main desires through receiving the three Yomim Tovim properly. But You know the evil of our hearts, our stubborn nature, crooked minds and great weakness, so that this eitzza too is hard for us to fulfill. For we don't know in what manner and way to merit receiving the three Yomim Tovim properly, as is revealed before You, Master of all, how far we are from the holiness of the Shalosh Regalim. For we have sinned in Your whole Torah, and especially in the holiness and joy of Shabbos and Yom Tov, and in the Shalosh Regalim alone we sinned many sins.

Please Hashem, let us know Your ways, and we should know how to find favor in Your eyes, and how to achieve our requests by you, in a manner that we should merit truly coming close to You. And we should merit fulfilling all the true and good eitzos, which were revealed to us through Your true Tzaddikim, until we'll merit returning to You with truth and a complete heart. Have mercy on us... we should all merit to receive the Shalosh Regalim with much happiness and boundless joy, and let us merit true simchas Yom Tov according to Your good desire.



A Loving Letter

עלים לתרופה רנ"ג

Baruch Hashem, predawn Wednesday, Rosh Chodesh Kislev, 5598

My soul-friend, the wondrous Mahar"i,

I received your letter this week; I read it well twice, and I know your pain. I received it while I was planning to travel to Breslov, and I thought, why answer you in writing if I'll be with you soon; we can talk face to face. But after arriving today, out of great love and yearning to work for your good - as was the Rebbe's command and desire to share his true good also with you all, each according to his yearning, toil and effort to receive from his true eternal good - I decided to reply to your letter before the day dawns, for I know that there are some words that are impossible to express in speech, and also since maybe some true awakening will sprout forth from this for the rest of our people who want the truth.

*You know the main thing already, and I'll tell you even more, not once, nor twice, but countless times: It is surely true as you wrote that Baruch Hashem, **true cures and life remedies are hidden with me; precious, wondrous and invaluable words that are full of advice and healing for the soul and body, eternal successes for everyone that is impossible to describe.** However, they are all concealed and hidden with all kinds of outer and inner wrappings, almost endless concealments within concealments. If not for Hashem's help to me and to all of you, in the Rebbe's merit and his holy strength in his wondrous ways, to reveal, make known and shine into the hearts of those who want their true soul cure. How we enliven ourselves with this!*

But you should know that every person, according to his yearning, desire and toil, and according to how he digs and searches with his mouth and heart to find the water from the holy wells; the wells of living water that were dug in Avraham Avinu's times but the Pelishtim filled with earth, and Yitzchak Avinu dug them up again, and he had many battles over them because the adversaries who were then called Pelishtim persisted to block him, and he battled them until he found water... and despite it, the wells are still blocked up, for since then until now, many Tzaddikim in every generation toiled to dig them up and reveal them, and it's impossible to put into words even just the glimmerings of my heart about this.

But the Tzaddikim of every generation achieved a lot, and revealed to us from then until now, especially from the day of Kabbalos HaTorah that we merited through the faithful shepherd Moshe Rabbeinu, and all the Tzaddikim who followed after him, every one of the great people dug wells of living water to heal the Yidden's ailments. There is no time to describe what happened throughout the generations; everyone according to his knowledge of the holy sefarim can understand a little bit of the miracles and wonders that were done with us in every generation.

For the true Tzaddik of the generation maintains the whole world in his times until the end. And it is said on him, 'the sun rises and the sun sets,' – Before the sun of this one sets, the sun of the next one rises already, and we have already spoken about this that before Shmuel Hanavi came after Eli Hakohen, the sun had almost set; the world was almost destroyed and the light would have died completely, but Shmuel Hanavi made the sun shine again and maintained the world after Eli Hakohen. And so in every generation, like we saw with our own eyes in this generation too: I the poverty stricken was raised amongst sages, and I licked from the dust of their feet, and I know that in our times, the holy light of the Baal Shem Tov had almost set, and just before his sun set, the sun of our master, the holy Rebbe, rose up.

*What can I say? What can I tell of what there is in my heart about this? Really, these words are not related to the answer to your question and bitter cry. But I know my son, I know your pain better than you. The general rule for all of you is that I cannot answer you at all. Rather, **every one according to how much he searches and digs for the wells of holy living water will surely find it in my bag**, the bag of the impoverished and pursued from all sides, due to which it is also full of stones and earth which foreigners have filled in order to conceal and hide the pearls of treasures. But despite it all, many waters cannot extinguish the love, and all kinds of darkness and concealments in the world won't be able to hide the lights that contain precious life treasures such as these, of which have already been revealed in his holy sefarim. And yet, you still need much toil to dig within me, the poor and impoverished. And if you'll search, you'll surely find. And you don't need impossible effort, just 'with your mouth and your heart...'*

***And mainly, you should believe in yourself at least as much as I believe in you, that you can still start from now.** There is no time for more, this is enough, for the day has dawned and with it Hashem's mercy; may it all shine on us and on you, until we'll merit truly returning to Him, and spend our days talking about the wonders that Hashem has done with us...*



Tov Li Toras

Picha...

Mrs. B.

Two children were wandering around the supermarket between the dairy refrigerator and the baking goods, in pursuit of parmesan cheese that their mother had requested for the kugel and for the filling for the cheesecake. In the midst of their search, Moshe asks his big brother Duvy, "You know why we eat dairy on Shavuos?"

"Why?" Duvy is curious to know what Moshe learns already in cheder.

Moshe: "So that we shouldn't make 'bal tashchis with all the food that Mommy prepares..."

All right, I'll admit that dairy food also makes me happy; since my childhood, a slab of cheesecake was the most exciting reward for whoever merited remembering to count the whole Sefiras Ha'omer.

But sometimes in my imagination, I try to remove the sweet creamy cheese layer of the Yom Tov and check if the Yom Tov Shavuos itself makes me happy. It hurts to admit that ... in truth, there isn't any special mitzvah – at least for us women

– on Shavuos, like there is on Pesach and Sukkos, and maybe because of this, our connection to the Yom Tov is slightly tenuous? And maybe there's something that 'steals' the true simchos Yom Tov from me? The connection to Kabbalos HaTorah, and its ensuing simcha?

Alien Philosophies

The Rebbe says that one must greatly distance oneself from chochmos

chitzonios, alien philosophies. Reb Nosson adds that on these it is written *'all those who come to her don't return,'* meaning that whoever learns these alien philosophies has almost no chance of extricating themselves from it.

What are alien philosophies? Plato and Socrates? Obviously not, since the Rebbe wouldn't exert himself to distance us so much from something that isn't applicable to us at all. The Rebbe tells us that the 'world' is full of alien philosophies, which seems to mean something like this:

Why am I not managing? Why is he successful? What's he doing?' Our minds are constantly busy looking for rules for the jungle of this world. 'If we do X, then Y will happen...'

Comes the Torah, which we received on Shavuos and receive anew each year, and reveals the only true formulae of the world: emuna, tefilla, bitachon, love of Hashem, fear of Heaven, belief in tzaddikim... As it says, *'fortunate is the nation that has this,'* – we have a detailed instruction booklet in our hands. ***And every single different solution to problems, difficulties, and challenges in life are called alien philosophies!***

In sippurei maasios, the tenth story of the Baal Tefila, the Rebbe tells about ten different alien philosophies that exist in the world (and in every single one of us), ten groups, of which each one measures all people, places, and

scenarios according to their yardstick. For example, the group of simcha chose to live in a place where there are many vineyards in order to make lots of wine – to get drunk and be happy. Their king was someone who could drink a lot, for that's the most admired person. And so too with all the other groups.

Every group also draws everyone who comes into contact with them into their ideas and each one has *'such crooked reasoning that it is chas veshalom possible to truly blunder in these false deductions.'* (Sippurei Maasios) and therefore, the Rebbe didn't describe their hypotheses at length so that we ourselves shouldn't get confused.

These above ideas ride around with us all day. For example: *"I feel well, because I ate according to diet X."* It is indeed forbidden for us to eat harmful foods, but our feeling well or not is not a result of what we ate – that's alien philosophies! Only according to Hashem's desire. That's the only thing that has an effect on me, and tefilla helps – that's guaranteed! There's always teshuvah...

Another example: There's lots of good advice on chinuch out there, and it's also very important to check out the schools you send to, but these don't have an effect on the results! Proof is very diverse graduates from the exact same family and schools. What then? Tefilla, tefilla, and tefilla, judging favorably, the mother's tznius, and the unique tafkid of every child in the world!

If we forget to map the world according to the Torah, and we run instead to alien philosophies, then we chas veshalom become distanced from the Torah, which becomes irrelevant during a nisayon, and therefore doesn't make us happy. In this, the Tzaddikim think differently to the world. They think like the Baal Tefilla.

Every person in the world goes around with all kinds of his own desires: Wealth, fame, friends, food, one success or the other – even spiritual success. The Tzaddik wants something else! The Tzaddik wants to do Hashem's will, to love Hashem, to reveal Hashem. And each and every time and occasion is a path to this. The Tzaddikim hear the Torah's viewpoint in every case and not what the groups drum into the world's heads. The Rebbe on Shavuos morning literally heard the sounds of Kabbalos HaTorah, and he wondered how come the Talmid that was with him didn't hear it...

'There where you shall go...'

In megillas Rus, Naomi begs her daughters-in-law to leave her and return to their fathers' home, but Rus pleads with her not to convince her anymore, for *'Where you shall go, I shall go.'* Rashi explains that she accepted upon herself not to go out of Techum Shabbos.

'Where you shall sleep, I shall sleep,' – according to Hilchos Yichud.

'Your nation is my nation,' – she accepted upon herself the 613 mitzvos.

'Your G-d is my G-d,' – she will not worship idols.

'Where you shall die, I shall die,' – she learnt the laws of the four deaths of the Beis Din.

'And there I shall be buried,' – according to the ruling of the Beis Din.

From the passuk itself, we see that Rus tells Naomi that she won't leave her in any situation, and Naomi suddenly surrenders and stops convincing her to leave her. Rashi explains what it was that convinced Naomi: The widowed, poor Naomi was looking for friends or support, that's not what convinced her, and it wasn't that with which Rus tried to change her mind. The two of them were talking about something else entirely.

In the way of chochmas HaTorah, Naomi was teaching Rus that ***'Hashem, the Yidden, and the Torah are one.'*** The Yid focuses his whole life on Hashem through the Torah, Hashem designs the whole world through the Torah, which is fulfilled through the Yid. And only when Rus accepts upon herself to always behave according to the Torah, to do Hashem's will, does Naomi accept her as a convert.

Further in the megillah, we see that Rus indeed relinquishes her honor as a princess and goes to gather wheat in the field. When Boaz inquires about Rus, *'Who is this maiden?'* Rashi explains again, *'Is it Boaz's custom to interest himself in women? Only, he saw ways of tznius and wisdom in her.'*

Rashi teaches us that every utterance and thought of the tzaddik Boaz was according to the Torah; there is no chance in the world that he would interest himself in a woman, even one that is foreign and different to everyone, if not for the fact that he saw in her Torah. Tznius means holiness, and chochmah means chochmas haTorah, as chazal describe in the midrash; *'She distanced herself from the male workers and gatherers, and she also gathered*

wisely, starting from the end of the field and working her way until the beginning, so that she shouldn't end up at the far end with a heavy bundle, which also required emunah that nobody can take away that which is destined for her. In that way, she had no need to squeeze herself in amongst the workers and grab like the other poor people.'

As if to say that Rus stood by her promise to Naomi that all her deeds would be l'shem shamayim; even when they were in a state of hunger, deprived of everything. When Rus saved half of the food that Boaz's workers gave her for Naomi who was hungry at home, then too, her motivation was chochmas haTorah, and not chochmos how to gather more wheat stalks and be more successful in her 'business,' or how to gain new friends (or a husband...) while gathering the wheat.

From the further proceedings in the story, we learn that even though it seems like Rus sacrificed e-v-e-r-y-thing, in the end, especially through her chochmos haTorah she received e-v-e-r-y-thing, even more than she could ever have imagined.

We can't break away from chochmos in one day

The Yom Tov of Kabbalos HaTorah is referred to as Shavuos, signifying the sefira that precedes it. According to what we've learnt, let's understand why.

We Yidden very much want and yearn to receive the Torah, to flee from all the alien philosophies just like the Yidden when they left mitzrayim. We want to rejoice with the Torah on Shavuos in all the corners of our hearts and minds, with all our 248 limbs and 365 sinews. But that's an enormous light.

The Rebbe in Torah 1 teaches us that receiving a great light requires tzimtzum

– constrictions. As the Rebbe calls it, the aspect of nun ג' – - Fifty. For our purposes, the 50 days of the Sefiras Ha'omer. Days of constriction and strictness, that passed over us as a preparation for Kabbalos HaTorah. Days in which we learnt how to extricate ourselves from chochmos, each day a little bit; from a different viewpoint, from different occurrences, and through a different part of chochmos haTorah. One day we returned to loving Hashem again from all our temptations and desires, once to fear of Hashem from all our fears and worries, and on the third week we reminded ourselves that Hashem takes pride in us and in our mitzvos, and so on in this way. And that's how we built ourselves receptacles to receive the light of the Torah, this wisdom that navigates and focuses our whole lives.

May it be His will that on this holy Yom Tov Shavous, we should merit receiving the strength, patience, willpower, and siyatta dishmaya to 'count Sefiras Ha'omer' all year long, to add a little bit of holiness every single day, by replacing our alien philosophies for the sweetness of life in the shadow of the Torah's wisdom, where I am never measured according to anyone else or relative to results, or to my status in this world. Rather, I start again each time anew to come close to Hashem and do His will, in the merit of Moshe Rabbeinu and the merit of the holy Rebbe Reb Nachman of Breslov, and in the merit of all the Tzaddikim.

If we'll go in this way, we'll build receptacles to receive the enormous light, and the Torah will indeed make us happier than anything else in the world can.

It's possible – there is no such thing as despair!



Ceaseless Searching

By Tzipora B.

Do you thirst, do you yearn?

Is the fire within you lit, does it at all burn?

Do you feel the lack, do you attempt to search, do you even try?

Does intense longing ever bring you to cry?

Did you ever feel lost, a neshama gone astray,

on a quest for answers that will wash your questions away?

Do you realize that it was the very sheep which thirsted and searched
that ended up on Moshe Rabbeinu's shoulder perched?

Do you know that it was the one talmid who davened and pleaded
throughout each winter Friday night

who was chosen to carry on the torch, who was zoiche to receive the
light? (שיש"ק ג, ס"ד)

Are you aware that the Tzaddik is right here
that his hashpa'a permeates the very air?

If you wish to connect, come close, become a part,

All you have to do is hear the call, answer the knock, open your heart.

קול דודי דופק פתחי לי...

According to how much a person truly relies
on the power of the Tzaddik, that's how much
the Tzaddik supports him.

כל
מי שסמוך יותר
על פח הצדיק שיש לו
פח אמתו, פני סמיכתו
באמת, פן הצדיק סומך
אותו ביותר. עלים
לתרופה שעט



The Fallacy of Democracy

By Aviva Gross

Jim escapes Kiddush

Rabbi M., a former Baal Teshuvah, opened a big kiruv institution in California to bring back estranged Yidden. He was very successful, besides for some individuals for whom nothing worked and they left to go back to the non-Jewish world. One of them was Jim, a clever and tall young chozer b'tshuvah. In the beginning, he was extremely inspired and made much progress in changing his lifestyle for the truth. But that was until he was invited to a Friday night seuda. Glowing in his spiffy new black suit, he was given the becher in hand and shown the nussach he was to recite for Kiddush. With all the fervor and sincerity of a new Baal Teshuvah, he carefully pronounced every word, and came to a sudden stop in the middle. His eyes narrowed in anger, he dropped the becher and ran out, never to return again.

*After much begging and persuasion, he finally agreed to explain what had put him off so much that he simply escaped. He came to the phrase *בנו קדשנו במצותיו ורצה בנו* and the meaning of those words got his blood boiling. It went totally against his strong democratic beliefs; "How dare we say that we are higher above all other nations? All humans are equal! What's this discrimination?"*

Democracy brainwashes us that a better sophisticated person is one who values everyone

equally – all religions, all genders, and even all beings (animal and person). But that's not true. With all due respect to democracy, we know that it's heretical to believe that we are all equal. Before giving us the Torah, Hashem announced, *ואבדיל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי עם סגולה* – and I will separate you from all the nations, to be my chosen nation. We are special, above, as chazal even say, *'אתם קרוים אדם, ואין אומות העולם קרוים אדם'* – You are called people, and the nations of the world are not called people. We are not equal!

The cow that teaches humans behavioral skills.

We all know that there are levels in this world:

1. דומם 2. צומח 3. חי 4. מדבר

1. Mineral 2. Plant 3. Animal 4. Human

But the Kuzari adds that there is a fifth level: יהודי - a Yid.

The same way that a human would never take courses from a very talented cow on social skills or strategies in emotional growth, so too a Yid will never trust or acknowledge anything taught or 'understood' by even the smartest most sophisticated goy. Besides for the cow's limitations in comparison to a person, a cow has completely different goals in life.

- Why should a horse work to be a better horse? In order to get better grass, more rest, or less wallops from his owner.

- Why should a goy work on “emotional growth”, “healing” “building relationships” etc.? In order to have a smoother life, to enable him to fulfill his תאוות more easily or to make more money.
- Why should a Yid work on growth, healing, self-confidence, and emotional health? In order to become a better Yid/mother, to give nachas to Hashem, and earn eternal reward in Gan Eden.

All three have complete different life goals and therefore different methods of growth and development.

In the 1700s, the world made big advances in the field of statistics. They learnt to gather data of differences in human bodies and minds, especially in biology, and come to important conclusions. Many of these results were very useful to halachic shaalos, and the Yidden wanted to benefit from these statistics for daily halachos. But the Chasam Soffer paskened that statistics which were gathered from goyishe bodies can't be used for Yidden, since they are made differently! The statistical results have no bearing for Yidden, as they have a completely different makeup. Although it looks like they have the same eyes, hands, minds... they DON'T!

“I’m no different than a cow, what’s the point of living?”

A prominent mashgiach was required to travel to some forsaken place in Switzerland in order to supervise a factory that was planning a Kosher production. The location wasn't exactly a tourist hit, which left him without any decent hotel to stay in, and he was forced to seek lodgings in a motel which provided him with a bed to sleep in. He made do with the lack of privacy caused by having a roommate, and politely greeted the goy who occupied the other bed in the room each morning and night while doing his own thing. His supper that week consisted of canned tuna, and he went about his rigorous schedule of getting up at dawn in order to daven, before needing to leave to oversee work in the factory. The lake was a perfect, albeit cold, mikveh, and everything was going fine.

At the end of the week, he noticed that his roommate was in a black mood. He would've

mind his own business, but for politeness's sake, he inquired what his problem was.

“You!” was the goy's unexpected answer. “I've been watching you all week, and you've stumped me. I'm a professor of human nature, and I've been studying behavior patterns over the last few years. I noticed that you kept on doing things against your will. You wanted to eat, but you first prayed your morning services. You wanted to go to sleep, but you first prayed your evening services. You got up earlier than you wanted to have time to pray before work. And nobody was even watching you!

“So I tried imitating you. I also tried doing things that I didn't want to do but I felt was right, but it was impossible! I couldn't get myself to do it! And that's when I realized that I'm living just like an animal; I can't go against my will to do what I know is right. If so, what's the point of such a life?”

Level #5 versus Level #4

והבדלנו מין התועים – And He separated us from those who stray. We are different. Let's discuss some differences:

- A goy can't change himself; he can only train himself, while a Yid can change himself to become a completely different person. *In the Rambam's times, some people who wanted to prove a point, spent many months training a cat to behave like a professional waitress. After lots of practice, they brought the cat to a meal to show it off, and indeed, she served the crowd beautifully, standing on her two hind legs. People were amazed at how dignified and humanlike she behaved, until the Rambam brought out a box from which jumped out a ... mouse! The former dignified cat threw the tray down and all the dishes went flying, while the cat tore across the room on all fours chasing after the mouse.*

Indeed, they proved a point. A goy with a tendency to anger needs to train himself to live with it, there's nothing else he can do. But a Yid can change himself and become calm, compassionate and patient.

- When a goy makes a mistake, he regrets it, feels guilty and eats himself up (or others around him), while when a Yid makes a mistake, he regrets it and does teshuvah.

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A Taste of the Rebbe's Treasures

Why is it that especially when I start serving Hashem, my yetzer hora becomes even greater?

This is the process of how it works, and one must find ways to strengthen oneself against it.

So says the Rebbe in Sichos Haran 10: "When two people fight each other, and one sees that the other is overpowering him, then he strengthens himself even more against him. So too exactly, when the bad sees that the good is awakening in someone, it strengthens itself even more. And this is a great rule in avodas Hashem for everyone on their level; the more a person wants to enter avodas Hashem, the yetzer hora strengthens itself even more over him... And a person must be wise in this matter, and go to war with all kinds of ideas to strengthen over the bad with great strength every time. Fortunate are those who manage to win the war."

The Rebbe also says in Sichos Haran 158: "You think that a person reaches all the levels in one go? It's not so; one must toil and exert oneself greatly in one's avoda until one reaches some good level."

What should I do when I try to serve Hashem but it seems to me that I'm just being distanced from above, and I'm not wanted at all; I feel like I'm just being ignored?

Don't look at this at all, just hold strong with your hischazkus, because Hashem is surely not throwing you aside, it's just that this is the way to go. Great tzaddikim also went through this.

Like the Rebbe says in Likutei Moharan 2, 48: "When a person enters avodas Hashem, the way is that he is shown distance, and it seems to him that he is being distanced from above, and he is not being permitted to enter avodas Hashem at all. But in truth, all this distancing is really only bringing closer. One needs very, very much hischazkus not to become discouraged chas veshalom, when one sees that many days and years are passing while he toils with much hard work for the sake of avodas Hashem, and he is still so far, and he hasn't even entered the gates of holiness. He sees himself still full of gashmius, bad thoughts and great confusion, and he isn't allowed to do whatever holy thing he wants to do for avodas Hashem. It seems to him like Hashem isn't looking at him at all and doesn't want his service, since he sees that he's crying, pleading and begging Hashem so much that He should help him serve Him, and despite it all he is

still so, so far. Therefore, it seems to him as if Hashem doesn't even look at him at all and doesn't turn towards him, because Hashem doesn't want him at all.

For all of this, one needs great hischazkus, to strengthen oneself very, very much and not look at all of this. Because truthfully, all this distancing is really only bringing closer. All of the above went over all the tzaddikim, as we heard from their mouths explicitly, that it seemed to them that Hashem wasn't looking at them at all, since so much time passed in which they were pleading, toiling, working and serving Hashem, and they were still so very far. If they wouldn't have strengthened themselves not to look at all of this, they would have stayed in their first level, and they wouldn't have merited what they merited.

The rule is, my beloved brother, strengthen yourself very much, and hold yourself with all your strength to stay firm in your service, and don't look at all of the above at all!"

How can I strengthen myself with patience so that I should be able to wait?

Through knowing that the main nisayon is in this waiting, and that many have fallen due to their impatience.

Reb Nosson writes on this in Likutei Halachos, Gezeila 5: "The main obstacle is because we need to wait a lot, and increase davening and pleading, and strengthen ourselves very, very much with everything that goes over us. Therefore, many don't manage to withstand the nisayon, and they fail to focus on their eternal lives, until they're distanced like they're distanced chas veshalom.

And even those whom Hashem helps and they stay firm in their holiness, and they don't let themselves fall or be lazy chas veshalom from increasing to daven, and to pour out their hearts like water every day, and for everything that goes over them; they would also not have had the ko'ach to strengthen themselves and wait patiently, if not for the strength of the holy Torah that we already received during matan torah, and for the true chiddushei Torah that we receive in every generation from the true tzaddikim, who with their awesome great holiness, draw Torah with such great mercy, until it gets drawn onto us too with their holiness, so that we should have the power to strengthen ourselves and wait patiently and increase davening and talking until Hashem looks at us from above..."

Even if we see that we're falling again and again, more and more, there is always still hope. Like Reb Nosson writes in Likutei Halachos Rosh Chodesh 5, 27: "It is known that most of the people who are far from Hashem are so because of such descents, since they see that they so much want to return to Hashem, but they keep falling more and more. The more they want to come out of the mud, the more the yetzer hora strengthens itself over them. Therefore, they tire of returning anymore, as if chas veshalom there is no hope. And this is what the passuk is referring to when it says 'Until when will you shy away.' Until when will you hide from Me, being embarrassed to return to Me due to your ways. There is no need for you to ever be embarrassed to return to Me, whatever happens, because My mercy is endless. You can always come with tefilla and pleading to beg Me that I should bring you close from now on, and your words will surely help."

Reb Nosson also writes in Likutei Halachos Birchos Hashachar 5, 30: "That which many people become discouraged after they start serving Hashem a little, and they don't strengthen themselves with strong desires to Hashem, comes from having doubts... The yetzer hora plants doubts in a person's heart, as if he has no hope of returning to Hashem, and as if he isn't achieving anything with his good desires chas veshalom, when the exact opposite is true. The main Yiddishkeit is

desires, as the Rebbe explained at length in many different sichos.”

Why is it that progress in avodas Hashem is so slow?

This is how Hashem behaves with us Yidden; in order for us to progress, we are told ‘hamten’ – wait. And we must continue wanting and waiting until Hashem will help.

So writes Reb Nosson in Likutei Halachos, Pikadon 4: “Whoever wants to enter avodas Hashem must be careful to hold onto both; he must be very quick and speedy in his service, and immediately do everything that comes up for him to do and not push off from day to day chas veshalom. But on the other hand, he must wait a great deal. Even when he sees that his service is not complete, and even if sometimes he can’t do anything at all, he must wait and hope for Hashem’s salvation... It is only possible to fulfil all the words of the Torah completely to truly cleave to Hashem through waiting, because we must wait very much until we merit what we merit.

Also someone whose service isn’t complete, even if it seems to him that he is still totally far, and even if it is truly so, but still he must wait and hope for Hashem’s help, and enliven himself meanwhile with whatever he can. Once with Torah, once with tefilla, once with hisbodedus and talking to Hashem, once with talking to his friend or Rav, once with doing some mitzvah or chessed, once with retzonos, yearning and longing which is the main thing, as the Rebbe said ‘the main thing is the ratzon.’”

In Chayei Moharan 431, it says, “Even in avodas Hashem, we sometimes need this; not to exert ourselves too much. Although we truly need to be very quick to purify ourselves properly in holiness and merit complete avodas Hashem with much speed, and it is forbidden to push off from one day to the next, because the world doesn’t stay still even just for the blink of an eye, therefore we must do anything we can strengthen ourselves to do in avodas Hashem immediately without delaying even for a second, for who knows how many obstacles, preventions and thoughts a person will have at a different opportunity - a person only has this hour and this moment in the world.

But even though, when we see that we’re strengthening and forcing ourselves for something and we aren’t managing to reach it, we sometimes need to wait and not get discouraged from this, not to get confused that we aren’t meriting this thing. We should wait a bit until the time will come. And it is impossible to explain this in writing at all.”

Sometimes, I try very hard in a specific matter of avodas Hashem, but I have lots of confusion and obstacles whether I’m able to do it.

Don’t let it discourage you, just continue doing yours, because your desires alone are like korbanos to Hashem.

As the Rebbe says in Sichos Haran 12: “For those who want to be righteous Yidden and enter avodas Hashem, but they have much confusion and obstacles, and they can’t find any solution how to behave due to their great confusion and obstacles; whatever they want to do in avodas Hashem is very hard for them to do properly: Know that just the fact alone that they are working and trying to do some avoda, or to purify themselves with some holiness, even if they can’t actually complete it correctly, the fact itself that they are working and chasing after it is an aspect of korbanos. So too by all avodos and holiness that a person wants to make himself holy with, even if he chas veshalom doesn’t merit making himself fittingly holy, but the toil itself and the pain and confusion that he has from it, since he wants and wishes to purify himself but he’s not being permitted, is an aspect of korbanos. As it says, ‘for Your sake we are killed all day, we are considered like sheep for the slaughter.’”

Therefore, a person should constantly do what he can, to work in avodas Hashem with whatever he can, and he should do whatever is possible for him to do, even if it's very hard for him and it seems to him as if he's not being permitted at all, and he's just being very distanced. He should do what he can do and Hashem will do what's good in His eyes."

The Rebbe also says there, "I believe and know a lot on this subject, that all movements, thoughts, and all kinds of avodos that a person does for the sake of any holy matter, no movement or thought is ever lost!"

My nisyonos seem way beyond what I can withstand!

Hashem doesn't give a person a test that he can't withstand, and specifically from your nisyonos you can see what a great neshama you have.

Reb Nosson writes on this in Likutei Halachos Birchos Hashachar 3: "Every person can take a mussar for themselves, when they see that their yetzer hora and temptations overwhelm them so much, and it seems like it's very hard to break them: One must know that Hashem surely doesn't come to a person with spitefulness. Surely, if he wouldn't have the strength to break it, Hashem wouldn't test him with such a yetzer hora. On the contrary, when he sees that he has such a big yetzer hora, he should know that his soul is surely very, very precious and holy at its root, and therefore he is being so overpowered. Because the more precious and higher the soul is, the more the yetzer hora strengthens itself over it, as it says, 'one who is greater than his friend, his yetzer hora is greater than his.' And it also says that the yetzer hora leaves all the idol-servers alone, and only tempts the Yidden. Not just that, but he leaves all the Yidden alone, and only tempts the talmidei chachamim... Therefore, the wise person, when he sees that the yetzer hora is strengthening itself so much over him, should know that he surely has a very great soul. And he must strengthen himself to have mercy on himself not to lose such precious treasures that depend on his soul... He should strengthen himself with all his might to save his soul from the depths, and save it from being stolen and switched chas veshalom, and mainly through many tefillos and bakashos."

People don't withstand their nisyonos because they don't realize their strength, as Reb Nosson writes in Likutei Halachos: "We must know and believe that surely every single Yid, even the lowest of the low, has lots of strength to resist his yetzer hora. The core of all the aveiros and temptations that a person gets stuck in chas veshalom are only due to the foolishness that he doesn't know his strength. As the Rebbe said, "Be strong, chazak v'nischazak, and don't be like a big elephant and camel that doesn't kick back to the mouse, only because it doesn't know its strength." A person must very much believe in his strength, and know with complete faith that his mind and brain surely have the strength to stand firm against temptations... As the Rebbe writes somewhere else, 'The soul of a Yid, even the lowest of the low, can surely stand against the whole world with its temptations.'"

Do my desires that I don't manage to attain count?

They don't just count, but the main part of avodas Hashem is what a person wants and desires to do Hashem's will.

So says the Rebbe in Sichos Haran 51: "I don't know who can say that they serve Hashem; according to the greatness of Hashem Yisbarach, whoever knows a little of His greatness, I don't know how they can say that they serve Him. And not a single malach or saraf can pride themselves with this that they can serve Hashem. Just the main thing is the desire, that a person should constantly have a strong and powerful desire to come close to Hashem. And even though everyone wants and desires to serve Him, but not all desires are equal. There are many differences in desires; even in one person himself at all times and all moments there are great differences in his desires."



Women's Views

The purpose of Sefira is to prepare ourselves for Kabbalos HaTorah given through Moshe Rabbeinu. In every generation we receive the Torah anew through the Tzaddik who is the aspect of Moshe. The tikkun for every single person is through him, and we should try with all our might to truly come close to him.” -Likutei Halachos

How can we as women come close to the Tzaddik?

Through reading his sefarim and following his eitzos. And before every mitzvah we do, we can say that we're doing it b'hiskashrus leRabbeinu, (hisbodedus too), and we can ask Hashem to help us b'zchus the Rebbe.

- Perele Leffler, Beis Shemesh,

We can come close to the Tzaddik by connecting to him e.g. before we daven “Hareini miskasheres atzmi etc.” and always remembering to daven for everything in the zechus of the tzaddikim. This is one of the sweetest shortcut gifts and eitzos of the Rebbe z”l to us.

Looking back, I am amazed to see what transformational miracles happened through asking the Rebbe z”l to interfere on my behalf. Actually, I ask the Rebbe z”l to polish my soul and boy does the Rebbe z”l do that. The Torah can only be achieved by perfecting our middos as stated in Pirkei Avos 6:6. How lucky to know that there's a tzaddik who can make sure we accomplish what we were sent here for.

- Sara Y. Landesman, Beis Shemesh

With true אמונה פשוטה, believing simply all

the Rebbe's teachings, without adding our intellectual smart brain and knowledge. The Rebbe says that women received אמונה פשוטה as a gift. They are by nature more connected to the truth deep within; they feel it. They don't need explanation or convincing... that's why the gemarah says that a woman can sense a guest and know his nature just by “feeling him” without any prior knowledge about him. So let's use our specialty and make our lives easy by trusting every single word simply as he said. We can connect to him quickly, without the need of toiling as much as men need to.

- R. E. Beck, Beis Shemesh

Close to the tzaddik also means close to the eitzos of the Tzaddik, besides for the inexpressible gift of the Tzaddik himself. Every year by Kabbalos Hatorah, we receive new daas and ideas how to actually fulfill the eitzos of the Rebbe which pertain to us women. For example; a new inspiration of emuna, a new way to practice self-discipline, a great idea how to actually do hisbodedus for 35 minutes. Hashem should help we should be zocheh

to kabbalos haTorah, meaning finding the eitzos pertaining to my individual growth!!

- *Esty S. Yerushalayim*

By way of allowing our husbands to fully follow the Rebbe's directives; whether it is travelling to Uman even when the timing is very awkward for us, allowing them out for hisbodedus when really, you'd prefer their help... and also by incorporating hisbodedus throughout our day, and strengthening ourselves to happy regardless of what's going on.

- *Yocheved Meyer, Manchester*

What a brocha to have so many paths to connect to the Rebbe! Whether it is reading his stories (especially at night to give my neshama tranquility), or learning his insights (so amazing in their power to uplift and connect us), the inspiration to live a life devoted to serving Hashem b'simcha, with emunah and bitachon is a gift directly from the Tzaddik. However, the single most powerful avodah for me is hisbodedus. When I push myself to do it (and push myself is what I often have to do) I have the gift of having a close, personal relationship with the Aibishter, and I'm acutely aware that this is a precious gift from the Rebbe. For each one of these I could say "dayeinu", but the combination fills me with overwhelming hakaros hatov. How blessed we are to have so many pathways to the Tzaddik!

- *Michal Miller, Denver*

I used to think that in order to come close to the tzaddik, I need to first come close to myself, so that I should have some semblance of knowledge of who what when where I am... But it wasn't working, because there's always deeper to go, and it just kept getting more complicated to "know who I am," so I dropped my story cold turkey and just forged ahead with simple "coming close to the tzaddik" without making it harder with sophistication. I just told myself, 'hey, I AM close to the tzaddik, because my whole life is based on his teachings.' I just had to stop throughout my day and pause when his teachings directed me. I stop and say, "Wow Rebbe, thank you." I internalize that it's his light that is helping me be spiritually-orientated and growing, and that helps

me feel close, because following his teachings automatically makes you close. We as women like to think that it's only valid if the feelings are there, so stopping and thinking this helps.

Also, when I think back to where I used to be and where I am now, tears just choke me up and I feel so, so incredibly endlessly grateful to the holy Rebbe for bringing me here, and then I feel such a tangible closeness. - *Malky Lebowitz, Monsey*

Whenever I need advice for something, I look in sefer hamiddos under that topic and I behave according to what it says there, since the Rebbe teaches us the way to go in every situation! And I believe that we can actually change the tevah through saying sheimos hatzaddikim, like the Rebbe said.

- *Malky Shechter, Manchester*

By saying 'hareini mekasher atzmi...' before davening. One Shabbos morning I told my three-year-old son to begin davening modeh ani, and he answered, "It doesn't go like that, it starts with 'hareini mekasher!'" They even have a special song for it in cheder (*in the tune of 'ki orech yomim...'*).

Also by saying after licht bentchen, as Reb Nossan told his wife and daughters: "*Just like I am lighting the Shabbos lecht, so too should the Rebbe's light burn brightly in the hearts of all Yidden.*"

- *Chane Rickel Weissfish, Beis Shemesh*

Through encouraging our husbands and helping them connect to the Tzaddik by letting them go to Uman, get up at chatzos, or go for hisbodedus, and generally supporting them in their avodos Hashem on the Rebbe's derech. And like that, the more our husband connects to the Tzaddik, the more he can transmit the Tzaddik's light to us in return.

Also by following the Rebbe's eitzos, and developing an appreciation and love for the Tzaddik, which connects us to him. Another helpful hint is to say hareini mekasher before davening, doing mitzvos, and following the Rebbe's advice.

- *Chavi Mendlowitz, Beis Shemesh*



The King and the Emperor

Sippurei Maasios Story 2

Part Two

Now, there was an elderly king who had an only son. He married him off and bequeathed the kingdom to him. The king's son said that he and his wife should take a cruise at sea, so that she should be accustomed to the sea air, in case, G-d forbid, they might at some point need to escape on the sea. He went with his wife and his ministers, and they were very jubilant and in a spirit of festivity. At one point, they decided they should strip off all their clothes, and so they did. They left on nothing except their undergarments. They began to dare to climb up onto the prow, the king's son among them.

Meanwhile the emperor's daughter came along in her ship, and saw this other ship (the ship with the king's son and his company), and at first she was afraid to draw near it. After coming a bit closer, she saw that they were merrymaking, and realized that they were not thieves, so they drew near. Then she said to her friends, "I can bring that baldhead toppling into the sea (that is, the king's son who was climbing the prow)." For he was in fact bald. Her friends replied, "But how is that possible? We are so far away from them." She explained to them that she has a lens with the power to burn, and she would use it to topple him. She added that she would not topple him until he climbed to the very tip of the prow. Because as long as he was still in

the middle, if he would fall, he would fall into the ship, but if he climbed until the tip, he would fall into the sea. She waited until he climbed all the way to the tip, and then she took her lens and held it up to the sun, and directed its rays squarely at his head, until his brain was burned and he fell into the sea.

When the friends of the king's son saw that he had fallen, it threw them into upheaval, for how could they return home – the king would die from sorrow. They decided to draw near to the ship they saw nearby (the ship of the emperor's daughter), perhaps they would find a doctor on board who could give them advice. They came next to the ship, and told them (the emperor's daughter and her friends) not to be afraid, they would not do them any harm. Then they asked, "Perhaps there is a doctor among you who could advise us?" and they recounted the whole story of how the king's son had fallen into the sea. The emperor's daughter answered that they should retrieve his body from the sea. They went and found his body and retrieved it. Then she took his pulse, and said that his brain had been burnt. They cut open his head, and saw that it was just as she had said, and they were astonished. They asked her to come home with them, and to be the king's doctor, and said that she would be very important

and esteemed, but she did not want to go. She added that she was not really a doctor, but she just knew these things.

The ministers of the king did not want to return home, so the two ships sailed together. They were very strongly in favor of their queen marrying the doctor, because of the impressive wisdom they saw in him (for they thought that the emperor's daughter and her friends were men, because they were dressed as men. Thus, they wanted their queen, the wife of the king who had died, to marry the doctor, who was really the emperor's daughter). And so that he should become their king, they would murder their original king (the elderly king mentioned earlier). They all wanted this very much, yet they felt they could not speak to the queen about marrying the doctor. She herself also wanted very much to marry the doctor, but she feared the country's people, lest they not be willing to accept "him" as king. So they decided to throw parties, so that during a party, while they were reveling, they could talk about this. They held a party for each one, each on a different day.

When the day arrived for the doctor's (the emperor's daughter's) party, she gave them to drink from her aforementioned wine, and they became drunk. While they were reveling, the ministers said, "How nice it would be for the queen to marry the doctor." "It would be very fine indeed," the doctor replied. "But if they would only say it without being drunk." The queen also responded, saying how nice it would be for her to marry the doctor, but the nation should just agree to it. The doctor (that is, the emperor's daughter), responded again as before, saying, "It would be very fine indeed, but only that they should say it without being drunk."

When they awoke from their stupor, the ministers remembered what they had said and were embarrassed before the queen on account of it. However, she herself had said the same. She was also embarrassed before them, but on the other hand, they had also

said it. They started talking about it, and came to agree on it. The queen was thus engaged to the doctor (the emperor's daughter who they believed to be a doctor), and they returned to their country.

When the people of the country saw them coming, they were very joyful, for it had been a long time that the king's son had been gone, and they had not known where he was. The elderly king had already passed on before their return. They noticed that the king's son, who was now their king, was missing, so they asked, "Where is our king?" They explained to them the whole story, how he had already died, and that they had already accepted upon themselves this new king, who had come with them. The people were very joyous that a new king had arrived.

Now the king (the emperor's daughter, who had now become a king) commanded to declare in every state, that everyone in every place, be he a foreigner, a guest, a fugitive or one banished, should come to the king's wedding, without exception, and that all would receive great gifts. He also commanded that they should dig wells surrounding the whole city, so that when one would want to drink, he would not have to go far, but would find a well right beside him. The king further commanded to paint a portrait of himself by every well, and to station guards by each one, to watch for someone who would come and stare an unusually long time at the portrait, and make a disturbed face (that is, whose expression would change, as one seeing something and being amazed and disturbed by it). Such a one should be arrested, and so they did.

The three aforementioned characters came: The son of the first king, who was the true husband of the emperor's daughter, the son of the businessman (whose father had banished him because of the emperor's daughter, who escaped with the ship loaded with merchandise), and the king who was dethroned (also by her doing, for she escaped from him

with the eleven ministers' daughters). Each one of them recognized her portrait, gazed at it, remembered, and was pained. They were all arrested.

At the wedding, the king (the emperor's daughter) commanded that the prisoners come before her. So they brought the three and she recognized them, but they did not recognize her, for she was dressed as a man. The emperor's daughter spoke up and said: "You King, (that is, the king who was dethroned as described). They dethroned you on account of the eleven daughters that were lost. Here are your ministers' daughters. Go back to your country and your kingdom." (The eleven ministers' daughters were here with her.) Then she turned to address the son of the businessman. "You businessman. Your father banished you on account of the ship with all the merchandise that you lost. Here is your ship with all the merchandise. As for all the time lost, now you have riches in the ship many times the original value." (For the ship also contained all the treasures she had taken from the thieves – a very tremendous wealth, overflowing in abundance.) "And as for you, son of the king, (that is, her true husband) come and let us go home." And they returned home, Amen.

In Mein Kampf, Hitler, may his name be blotted out, described one reason why Yidden are a danger to humanity: They have the middah of regretting, which is harmful since it eats up a person. According to the goyim, a person isn't allowed to feel guilty, because it doesn't achieve anything, it only leads to despair and depression. But a Yid has a healthy conscience which pursues him and brings him to charata and teshuva.

- A goy behaves 'nicely and politely,' while a Yid behaves תורה'דיג.

Somebody was talking to the Rebbe, and he praised a certain person who behaves very correctly – 'אן ארענטליכע – an honest, dignified person.' The Rebbe retorted, "The word ארענטליך doesn't apply for Yidden. The goyim behave with manners according to what their minds and sense requires, which is called ארענטליך. But the holy Yidden, even the mitzvos which make sense according to common sense, they don't do out of manners, because it makes sense and seems right, only because Hashem commanded us to do so in the Torah (and therefore sometimes when the Torah says so a Yid will act not "ארענטליך" - he might shout, yes, he might even hit, but he does what's right, not what's nice).

If we are zoiche to free ourselves from the depravity of the democratic belief of equal rights for all nations, we will be advanced in time and age, as the Malach, R' Avraham Duber Levin, who paved the way for all of us here in the USA once said: "in the times before Mashiaich comes, even the goyim will become disenchanted with democracy, - just like they became with all the kinds of rulership, like royalty, communism, and so on... they'll say they only want Hashem's rulership, since no other sovereignty works!"

So Baruch Hashem, we realize it now already, - we are lucky enough to follow the greatest philosophical guidelines on human growth from the Rebbe, instead of philosophical guidelines from a "nation of donkeys, 'עם הדומה לחמור' as chazal call them, which, after many years of growing and developing, reached the height of advances in turning an aristocratic nation of goyim into sophisticated animals, as we see today: the more you sing, talk and dress like animals, the more advanced you are. There's no need to elaborate, as we see it clearly in these times.

Now we understand the Rebbe's words that indulging in this great gift of being chosen by Hashem to be a Yid and not a medaber – a goy, is enough to bring a person to the greatest simcha, to dance and sing **גוי עשני גוי!**



The Rebbe's Journey to Eretz Yisrael

Chapter ten

The homebound journey of the Rebbe and R' Yitzchak is fraught with danger, notwithstanding their trials and travails on their way to Eretz Yisrael. Aboard a Turkish warship, they suffer from hunger and thirst, storms and anti-Semitism, threats of slavery and near-drowning. The storm wind blows their ship to Rhodes Island, where the captain miraculously allows Reb Yitzchak into the city to get food, and he contacts the Yidden there, who help him with Pesach food and more. They then come to the captain to try and ransom the Rebbe and Reb Yitzchak.

“But what shall I tell ya?” The captain resumes his longwinded speech, keenly aware that his listeners are hanging onto his every word, and that their faces are drooping lower and lower with every sentence he utters. Delighted with his chance to get some attention from such high-class, nattily-dressed men, he continues with a flourish. “Their luck is so great, it

reaches the very heart of the heavens! Not only did G-d make them such a miracle that the ship suddenly arrived here by their good fortune, but He also made them a miracle within a miracle; He twisted my heart and confused my mind so much, that I actually took one of ‘em with me into the city.” He shakes his head, marveling at himself for really doing

that. Impressed with his new-found eloquent manner of speech, the superstitious captain concludes earnestly, "So now, I am surely not even allowed to take their money. But just so my workers shouldn't beat me up, give me 200 thalers and take your two men from the ship."

The sage and his two companions are left with their mouths hanging open in disbelief at this unexpected ending. 200 thaler is immediately extricated from the wealthy men's fat purses, and the captain greedily grabs at the sum. Before he gets a chance to demand any more, the sage goes to get his men, and returns with the Rebbe and Reb Yitzchak in tow. They are now free men! Reb Yitzchak literally dances all the way off the ship and into the city. Death and slavery at the hands of these cruel pirates had been looming in front of them, but all that is a matter of the past! They are alive and free!

The city gates rise up, tall and welcoming, and Reb Yitzchak prances in. But alas, his earlier fears upon entering the city now come true. With their strange manner of dress and fair skin, the Turks accuse them of being spies, which is no small charge in this war-ravaged era. Dread settles on the Yidden, they are very afraid. Without further ado, they send for two extra pairs of the clothing the local Yidden wear, and the Rebbe and Reb Yitzchak are forced to put on these strange robes. Reb Yitzchak finds it very amusing, but the Rebbe has lots of anguish. He rebukes Reb Yitzchak, telling him, "You don't know about the prosecution that hangs over us in the upper worlds." He then tells Reb Yitzchak something wondrous, but Reb Yitzchak never reveals what it was.

The Rebbe is warmly received by the sages; they admire him and regard him to be a greatly unique person. Afterwards, the Rebbe himself becomes very happy, and says, "Baruch Hashem that we merited this salvation." He stays there until after Yom Tov, and is held in very high esteem. In a show of honor, the people pay his 200 thalers of ransom money from their own pockets and refuse to allow the Rebbe to repay

them, even though he has plenty of money there.

Following Yom Tov, a ship to Istanbul is hired on their behalf. The community provides them with a letter, to be used in case of necessity chas veshalom, asking all cities along their way to stand at their side. They travel to Istanbul with this ship which is filled with many Greeks, and a plague soon breaks out among them. Although the Rebbe and Reb Yitzchak don't know about the plague, it is impossible not to notice the many dead bodies piling up from all sides. The gory sight only exacerbates the seasick stomach...

A storm wind whips up and thrusts the ship further along the raging waves in a flying motion. Despite the discomfort it causes, it turns out to be for their benefit since it shortens their journey to just three days. Hastening the ship's arrival to Istanbul, they get there with their lives intact, not having contracted the awful plague Baruch Hashem.

Their stay in Istanbul lasts for ten days, yet these days are also filled with danger and suspense. Since they didn't show their passports when they arrived, the officials don't want to allow them to leave. Charging them an exorbitant amount of tax, they demand that they pay this impossible sum in order for them to be able to receive passports from the Sultan allowing them to travel. But this inflated price is far beyond their capabilities; they are unable to come up with such huge funds, regardless of their best efforts. However, Hashem has mercy on them and sends them some unidentified person, who goes to a certain Turkish minister on their behalf. The amount he uses to bribe him is unknown to them, all they know is that he somehow wrangles a document from him allowing them to leave the city gates. The stranger warns them, "For heaven's sake, don't reveal what transpired to anyone, just keep the matter very secret!" And so, they are saved from their troubles there and are able to leave in peace.

Their next destination is Galatz. The sea serves

as their constant companion as they sail onwards, ever further, ending up on some random island city. Their welcome takes the form of handcuffs, and they are carted off to languish in jail. In the time-honored custom, bribery opens up all locked doors and for the princely sum of four adumim per head, the Rebbe and Reb Yitzchak are set free. From there on, their journey proceeds smoothly with no more disturbances, excluding the minor unpleasantness of the ship bouncing on rocking waves amidst stormy seas. An open-mouthed Reb Yitzchak watches one ship filled with Greeks break into pieces with its unfortunate passengers finding a watery grave, save for very few who manage to survive the sinking. Humbled after realizing that his ship could meet the exact same end, it is an immensely gratified Reb Yitzchak who disembarks at Galatz, full of praise and thanks to Hashem Who brought them to their destination alive and well. It is a great relief - Galatz marks the end of their journey at sea, and an uplifted Yom Tov Shavuot is spent there.

It is still no simple matter until they end up in their hometown, even though their journeying is now comprised of passing through city after city, town after town. Iasi comes up first, where there is a great plague raging. It spreads its doom, chases them until the border, where they are denied permission to cross. Coming from such a plague area, even remaining in quarantine is not sufficient to allow them to pass through. But Hashem is with them, and they are saved from everything; the plague, the sword, hunger, thirst, and captivity. With Hashem's mercy, they are saved from everything and arrive to their houses in peace. 'Whole in their body, their possessions, and their Torah.' For the Rebbe merited wondrous revelations in Eretz Yisrael; much higher, greater, and deeper than our grasp or comprehension.

All this is only a drop in the bucket, a small percentage of the suffering, distress, deep dangers, painful anguish and great fears that the Rebbe had in his journey to Eretz Yisrael and back. But Hashem was at his side, and performed awesome, wondrous miracles with him at all times, and he merited to achieve what he wanted completely; he entered in peace, left in peace, and arrived home in peace. The depth of the revelation he reached in Eretz Yisrael is impossible to describe at all.

Regarding his sojourning in Eretz Yisrael: The Rebbe once said that he has much happiness that he merited being in Eretz Yisrael. For he had so many obstacles, numerous confusions and countless thoughts, blockages, and struggles on the matter of his traveling to Eretz Yisrael, as well as money issues. Yet he overcame it all and finished the job completely. And he said, "I believe and also know a lot on this matter, that every move, every thought, and all kinds of efforts that a person does for the sake of any holy deed; no movement or thought is ever lost. And when a person merits breaking the obstacles to achieve the holy deed, then from all the movements, thoughts and confusion that the person had in this matter before he overcame his obstacles, while he was still in doubt, confused and unsure whether he should do it, and the obstacles were rising up from all sides; but after he merited overcoming it all and breaking it all, then lofty exaltedly holy things are made from all the obstacles, thoughts, movements and confusion. Everything is recorded up in heaven; every single movement that he had earlier on. And fortunate are those who manage to prevail over all the obstacles, and merit completing and doing any good deed."

And how fortunate we are that Hashem gave us so much good, that we merited the holiness of Eretz Yisrael!

The end